

**DATE:** November 17, 2005**SUBJECT:** Status of the Tennessee Institute of Public Health**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Information

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**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Tennessee Institution of Public Health is proposed as a free-standing and, when fully organized, self-supporting entity built through collaboration of public health programming at University of Tennessee and Tennessee Board of Regents institutions, the Tennessee Department of Health, and the private sector. The purpose of the proposed statewide, not-for-profit institute is to provide and broker services aimed at improving the health of Tennesseans through health education, research, and policy analysis.

Partners in the initiative support formalizing the Institute through a Memorandum of Understanding, which will permit THEC, as the leading agency for the Institute, to contract with an existing university or state employee, with appropriate professional credentials, for a portion of time to serve as the interim director. A new THEC position will not be created, nor will the interim director be placed in an existing personnel position. The interim director will have responsibility for organizing the Institute; constituting a board of directors with appropriate representation from academic institutions, government, and the private sector; establishing auditable accounting and management procedures; and developing a strategic plan for financially sustaining the Institute. THEC will provide leadership in carrying out the terms of the MOU, ensure oversight of the interim and long-term operation of the Institute, and promote its services and financial viability.

The Institution will provide an opportunity for synergy regarding collaborative research among participating academic institutions, the Department of Health, and other partners. The development of the Institute concurrent with the development of graduate programming in public health at Tennessee institutions presents a timely and enhanced research networking potential in support of the State's interests in health education and research. The University of Memphis together with the University of Tennessee Health Science Center is developing a proposal for a joint college of public health to house an expanded masters and new doctorate. East Tennessee State University's proposals for a college of public health and a doctorate are at the campus approval state. Proposals for a masters and doctorate in public health are being constructed according to an established calendar at Tennessee State University.